

Message Text

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16

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-14 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 ACDA-19 OMB-01 DRC-01 /138 W

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R 211530Z NOV 73

FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7306

INFO AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY LISBON

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 6843

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB PFOR PINT SP VT

SUBJECT: RECENT CHURCH RELATED PROTESTS-GOS TRANSFER OF
ZAMORA PRIESTS

REF: MADRID 6490

1. SUMMARY. GOS HAS TRANSFERRED SIX PRIESTS INVOLVED
IN ZAMORA PRISON HUNGER STRIKE TO MADRID'S CARABANCHEL
PRISON HOSPITAL, THUS ACCEDING THEIR DEMAND TO BE PLACED
WITH OTHER POLITICAL PRISONERS. THIS FOLLOWED VARIOUS OTHER
PROTEST ACTIONS SUCH AS SIT-IN AND HUNGER STRIKE AT BILBAO
EPISCOPAL PALACE, SIT-IN AT NUNCIATURA, EARLIER MASS
ARRESTS 113 OPPOSITIONISTS IN BARCELONA, AND CONSIDERATION
THESE MATTERS AT LAST CABINET MEETING. GOS CONCILIATORY
ACTION APPEARS BE RELATED TO ITS DESIRE FOR PROGRESS ON
CONCORDAT NEGOTIATIONS AND TO CONVOCAION OF SPANISH
BISHOPS CONFERENCE FOR NEXT WEEK. RECENT PROTESTS APPEAR WELL
PLANNED AND COORDINATED BY ELEMENTS LIBERAL CLERGY, BROAD
RANGE OPPOSITION, AND WORKERS COMMISSIONS. END SUMMARY

2. GOS NOV 18 TRANSFERRED SIX OF SEVEN PRIESTS INMATES
OF SPECIAL PRIESTS JAIL IN ZAMORA TO MADRID'S CARABANCHEL
PRISON HOSPITAL, THUS DRAMATICALLY ACCEDING TO PRIESTS'
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DEMANDS AND WIDESPREAD PRESSURES. EPISODE COMMENCED NOV 6

WHEN PRIESTS BURNED THEIR JAIL QUARTERS TO CALL ATTENTION THEIR DEMAND THEY BE JAILED WITH OTHER POLITICAL PRISONERS AND THAT SPECIAL ZAMORA PRIESTS PRISON BE CLOSED. SIX PRIESTS BEGAN HUNGER STRIKE WHICH LASTED 13 DAYS UNTIL THEIR TRANSFER TO THE CARABANCHEL HOSPITAL IN WEAKENED CONDITION.

3. EPISODE PRECIPITATED VARIOUS OTHER SOLIDARITY PROTEST ACTIONS, SUCH AS A TWO-WEEK SIT-IN BY FIFTY PRIESTS IN BILBAO EPISCOPAL PALACE, SIT-INS AT SEVERAL PARISH CHURCHES IN BASQUE PROVINCES, AND SIT-INS AT JESUIT UNIVERSITIES BILBAO AND MADRID. ALL THESE WERE ENDED WHEN ZAMORA PRIESTS WERE TRANSFERRED TO CARABANCHEL. IN ADDITION, FOUR BISHOPS ISSUED STRONGLY WORDED JOINT STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF PROTESTERS' DEMANDS, AND 24-HOUR SIT-IN WAS HELD NOV 10-11 AT VATICAN NUNCIATURA IN MADRID BY SOME 150 PRIESTS, NUNS AND LAY INDIVIDUALS.

4. FOLLOWING THESE EMBARRASSING PROTESTS AND AFTER CONTACTS BETWEEN NUNCIATURA AND FOREIGN MINISTER LOPEZ RODO AND BETWEEN MADRID CARDINAL TARANCON AND PRESIDENT CARRERO BLANCO, ZAMORA PRIESTS AND CHURCH-RELATED PROTESTS WERE CONSIDERED AT NOV 16 CABINET MEETING, AFTER WHICH GOS ISSUED SOMEWHAT CONCILIATORY STATEMENT REFERRING TO FRANCO'S 1972 YEAR-END SPEECH AND EMPHASIZING GOS' CONTINUED ATTITUDE OF "RESPECT AND COOPERATION" TOWARDS CHURCH WITHOUT SEEKING EITHER "APPLAUSE OR GRATITUDE."

5. BESIDES ZAMORA EVENTS, A SECONDARY INCIDENT BEING PROTESTED WAS OCT 28 MASS ARREST 113 OPPOSITIONISTS WHILE THEY WERE HOLDING ILLEGAL POLITICAL MEETING IN BARCELONA PARISH HALL. MOST OF 113 DETAINEES WHO RANGE FROM DISSIDENT MONARCHISTS TO COMMUNISTS, ARE STILL IN JAIL. CARDINAL JUBANY OF BARCELONA ON NOV 12 ISSUED STRONG STATEMENT IN DEFENSE OF 113 JAILED OPPOSITIONISTS, AND CALLED FOR ESTABLISHMENT FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION AND ASSEMBLY AS BASIC HUMAN RIGHT CURRENTLY LACKING IN SPAIN. CARDINAL'S STATEMENT INSPIRED STRONGLY WORDED PUBLIC REBUTTAL FROM BARCELONA CIVIL GOVERNOR.

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6. COMMENT: TRANSFER ZAMORA PRIESTS REPRESENTS SIGNIFICANT VICTORY FOR PROTESTERS. GOS CONCESSION WAS APPARENTLY GESTURE TO CHURCH AT THIS DELICATE STATE IN CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS IN THE INTEREST OF PROGRESS ON CONCORDAT NEGOTIATIONS.

7. BOTH LIBERAL CLERGY AND POLITICAL OPPOSITION HAVE BEEN CONCERNED AT RECENT MOVES BY GOS AND VATICAN TO GET LONG-STALLED CONCORDAT NEGOTIATIONS MOVING AGAIN, PARTICULARLY

BY NOV 1-3 VISIT OF VATICAN'S MSGR.CASAROLI TO MADRID (SEE REF) WHICH APPEARS HAVE ACTED AS CATALYST FOR LIBERAL CLERGY TO DRAMATIZE ITS VIEWS THAT CHURCH SHOULD DIVORCE ITSELF ENTIRELY FROM REGIME AND THAT SPECIAL PRIVILEGES (E.G. SEPARATE PRISON TREATMENT FOR PRIESTS) ARE AN ANACHRONISM.

8. ALTHOUGH TRANSFER OF PRIESTS HAS ENDED THE VARIOUS SIT-INS, PROTEST MOVEMENT IS LIKELY TO BE RENEWED SHORTLY, POSSIBLY WHEN SPANISH BISHOPS CONFERENCE MEETS NEXT WEEK. DELIBERATIONS OF BISHOPS CONFERENCE WILL NOW BE FOLLOWED WITH MORE THAN USUAL INTEREST BY PRESS AND WITH SOME APPREHENSION BY GOS.

9. RECENT PROTEST ACTIONS EVIDENCE SOPHISTICATED AND EXTENSIVE COORDINATION AND PLANNING BEHIND WHICH APPEAR TO BE SIGNIFICANT ELEMENTS OF LIBERAL CLERGY (PARTICULARLY BASQUES), WIDE SPECTRUM OF POLITICAL OPPOSITION, AND COMMUNIST-DOMINATED WORKERS COMMISSIONS.

10. IT IS NOTEWORTHY THAT ONE OF PRIESTS AT ZAMORA PRISON WAS FATHER GARCIA SALVE, ONE OF THE "CARABANCHEL TEN", WHO HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN IN CARABANCHEL PRISON ALONG WITH OTHER NINE WORKER COMMISSION LEADERS AWAITING TRIAL SINCE JUNE 1972 BUT WAS TRANSFERRED UNDER PROTEST TO ZAMORA PRISON SOME MONTHS AGO BECAUSE OF HIS CLERICAL STATUS. GARCIA SALVE REPORTEDLY ENLISTED THE SUPPORT OF THE WORKERS COMMISSIONS FOR THE IMPRISONED PRIESTS DEMANDS. GOS' TRANSFER OF ZAMORA PRIESTS TO CARABANCHEL HOSPITAL MEANS THAT GARICA SALVE NOW FINDS HIMSELF BACK IN CARABANCHEL WHERE HE MAY SOON REJOIN HIS ERSTWHILE COMPANIONS (INCLUDING COMMUNIST LEADER MARCELINO CAMACHO) OF THE "CARABANCHEL TEN").

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